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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 429  
By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Turner E. Kirkland of  
Obion County.

WHEREAS, it was with great sadness and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of our state learned of the death of Turner E. Kirkland, a great Tennessean who worked assiduously and with dedication to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, we remember Mr. Kirkland as a generous philanthropist, a dedicated family man, a successful proprietor, and a devoted community servant, and we recall his commitment to Obion County and our great state and his bountiful life of purpose; and

WHEREAS, a native Tennessean, Mr. Kirkland was born in Union City in 1920, the son of the late Arthur Edward and Rossie Virginia Turner Kirkland; and

WHEREAS, as an 11-year-old boy, Turner Kirkland bought an 1849 Colt Pocket Model pistol for six bits, setting the stage for what was to become a lifetime career; friends say Mr. Kirkland sold the pistol for a \$2.25 profit, thereby embarking on a career of buying and selling antique guns; and

WHEREAS, as a young teenager, Mr. Kirkland pursued his passion further; he spent considerable time studying antique guns, particularly muzzleloaders, and by his mid-thirties, he was devoting full-time attention to what was first a hobby, then a side-line business; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland courageously and proudly served his country during World War II as a member of the US Army; he served bravely overseas in the Pacific Theater from 1942 through 1946 and was awarded five Combat Zone Stars and eight medals; and

WHEREAS, after returning from the war, Mr. Kirkland's business grew so rapidly that he was able to purchase his own 3,000 square foot building and began publishing his own twelve page catalog; and

WHEREAS, Kirkland's enterprise, Dixie Gun Works, has since developed a reputation worldwide as the best blackpowder gun and supply store, a reputation which has drawn such famous clients as Hank Williams, Jr., Roy Clark, Tom T. Hall, Grandpa Jones, Porter Wagoner, Peter Fonda and Ned Beatty; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his affinity for managing a complex independent business, Mr. Kirkland was successful in balancing a great number of activities relative to his business, gun collecting and historic preservation, including the National Rifle Association, Tennessee Gun Collectors, the National Muzzleloading Rifle Association, the National Arms Collectors Association, and many other gun collecting groups and antique car clubs; Mr. Kirkland was also a member of various Heraldry Orders such as the Sons of the American Revolution and founded the Confederate Chronicles of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland was the recipient of numerous professional awards and accolades in his time, including "Small Business Administration Man of the Year" for Tennessee, 1972; Mr. Kirkland was also honored by the Gun Dealers of America, The Old Northwest Museum, *American Rifleman* magazine, the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association, and *Field and Stream* magazine, who ranked Kirkland among the top 20 persons who have done the most to influence outdoor sports between 1895 and 1995; and

WHEREAS, perhaps Mr. Kirkland's greatest triumph came as he was the first person to produce a replica of a muzzleloading firearm, and his New Dixie Squirrel Rifle, introduced in 1955, marked the beginning of the replica firearms industry as we know it today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland graduated from the University of Tennessee, Martin in 1982 and was the oldest graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree that year; Mr. Kirkland earned 15 hours of undergraduate credit from Oxford University in Oxford, England, an honor given to only a few of the brightest American students; and

WHEREAS, knowing full well the value of furthering his education, Mr. Kirkland also accrued 21 hours toward his master's degree at Murray State University, of which 6 credits were from Oxford University, and attended a summer program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study ethics and literature; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland revealed himself as a diligent upholder of the great volunteer tradition of the state of Tennessee by devoting many years of his life to the development and enhancement of the community he loved; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland has served his community and fellow citizens in numerous civic leadership capacities, including meritorious service as board member and former director of the Union City Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the March of Dimes, member and former vice-president of the Civic Club Jaycees, county chairman and fundraiser for the West Tennessee Blood Center, treasurer of the Obion Association for Retarded Adults, organizer and former president of the West Tennessee Television Council, and member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Northwest Tennessee Tourist Promotion Council, the Tennessee Committee for Humanities and the Tennessee Conservation League; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland will be remembered by his friends in the Kiwanis Club for years to come, as he was a former president and dedicated member for four decades; as a Kiwanian, he was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Tablet of Honor, the highest award given to any member; and

WHEREAS, through his Kiwanis membership, Mr. Kirkland worked to establish Alcoholics Anonymous groups in the Union City area and, as a result and as a tribute to his efforts, five self-sustaining AA groups continue to help the citizens of Union City today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland also performed much civic work as a Mason and a Shriner; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland also gave unreservedly of his time and talents to the University of Tennessee system, serving as a member of UT's Century Club, Development Committee, Arts Council and President's Trust; and

WHEREAS, ever a generous philanthropist, Mr. Kirkland donated a Steinway concert grand piano to the Obion County Arts Council, an instrument now worth more than \$65,000; in recognition of his efforts to promote fine arts and the humanities, he was awarded the Patron of the Union City Arts Council Lifetime Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland also found time to devote to state government; he served ably and diligently on several governor's committees, including Governor Blanton's Committees on Employment of the Handicapped and Civil Rights; Governor Dunn's Committee on Energy Conservation; and Governor McWherter's Committee on the Employment of People With Disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in return for his service to the state, Mr. Kirkland received many distinguished titles, including Honorary Staff Member of the 77<sup>th</sup> House District, Honorary Member of the Tennessee State House of Representatives, Honorary Member of the Lieutenant Governor's Staff, and Honorary Floor Leader of the Tennessee State Senate; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland was a devout member of the First Christian Church since 1927, and was an active Deacon since 1934; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirkland enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, the former Louise Moss, with whom he was united in marriage on October 11, 1968; Mr. Kirkland was the proud father of three sons, Lee Fry, Hunter Kirkland and Charles Kirkland; and

WHEREAS, the Kirklands were blessed with 12 grandchildren: William Kirkland Fry, Matt Goodrich, Clay Goodrich, Ty Goodrich, Sarah Kirkland, Christian Kirkland, Caitlin Kirkland, Anne Westbrook, Beth Westbrook, Ann Turner Kirkland, Caroline Kirkland and John Kirkland; and

WHEREAS, throughout a life blessed with purpose and commitment, Turner Kirkland proved himself to be an astute businessman and dedicated civic leader of the utmost integrity, expertise and ingenuity; and

WHEREAS, the legacy Mr. Kirkland leaves behind will be long remembered and treasured by those who were fortunate to know him; and

WHEREAS, it is therefore appropriate that we pause to reflect fondly upon Turner Kirkland's dynamic life and his tireless commitment to perpetuating the public good; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby pause to honor the memory of Turner Kirkland of Obion County, remembering with admiration his exemplary character and many selfless contributions to his community and the people of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Mr. Kirkland.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.